

Questions from the December 13, 2005 meeting with local officials in Cape May, NJ.

Attendance:

Merv Brokke – USACE

Mark Eberle – USACE

Bob Imler – Lwr. Twp. Env. Comm.

Kathleen McPherson – Lwr. Twp

David Rutherford – Lwr. Twp Env. Comm.

Clay Sutton – Concerned Citizen

Fred Long – Concerned Citizen

Lee Widjeskog – NJDEP

Pam Kaithern – West Cape May Borough

Comment: Longer time was needed for questions and comments at the public meetings.

Answer: A majority of the questions and answers were not shared with the group because of the small group format after the main question and answer period. Historically, in the time allotted for a public meeting or open house more questions can be answered individually or in small groups as compared to doing so in a larger forum. As always, our intent for these meetings is to answer as many questions as possible in the allotted time.

Question: What about saltwater intrusion into the groundwater that lies above the clay layer (the Holly Beach Zone)?

Answer: Yes, saltwater will enter the Holly Beach Water-Bearing Zone, but this will be limited to areas of the lower marsh.

Question: What is the pressure (head) of the fresh water to offset the salt water?

Answer: The Ghyben-Herzberg relation is a formula $z_s = 40z_w$

Where:

z_s is the distance from sea level to the salt water interface and

z_w is the distance from sea level to the water table surface

The Ghyben-Herzberg relations shows that if the water level near the shore line in a water tale aquifer is 1 foot above sea level then the salt water is 40 ft below sea level.

And if fresh water is 1 inch above sea level then salt water is 40 inches below sea level.

Question: How far is the salt water going to inundate?

Answer: Approximately, 170 acres of the lower marsh.

Question: How do you plan to protect the jetties?

Answer: Jetties will be protected by periodic replacement of sand around them from maintenance dredging associated with keeping the new channel free of sand.

Question: With all the lateral channels proposed in the draft EA, is 1.4 acres of wetland impacts correct?

Answer: This calculation will be checked during the preparation of the final EA which we plan to issue in February 2006.

Question: What about the water flow through the spoil area? How will you prevent contamination or problems with the pH?

Answer: Monitoring wells will be established and monitored to insure that the project does not release high levels of contaminants into the marsh.

Question: What will the monitoring chain of command be at NJDEP? Or who do we call if there is a problem?

Answer: Lee Widjeskog will prepare a chain of command diagram for use by local officials to call for assistance in case there is a problem. When completed, that document will be available on the project website.

Question: Can we get a copy of the Project Cooperation Agreement?

Answer: Yes, go to website:

http://www.usace.army.mil/civilworks/cecwp/branches/policy_compliance/see1135_2.pdf

Question: Can we get a copy of the monitoring report required under the Federal Consistency Determination from NJDEP?

Answer: Yes, when we have an approved monitoring plan from NJDEP that document will be posted to the project website.

Question: Is Southern Gray Tree Frog an issue?

Answer: No, the review of NJDEP determined that the extant of the tidal inundation was far enough away from potential tree frog habitat to be an issue.

Question: Why don't you build small berms along the back of the marsh to insure protection to the freshwater wetland areas?

Answer: We feel that the impact of the small berms and the additional cost are unnecessary to achieve the project goal and protect important freshwater wetlands in the upper marsh. We feel that the proposed water control structure will be able to control the amount of tidal inundation and thus, prevent selected freshwater areas from being inundated.

Question: Will Davey's Lake be inundated with saltwater?

Answer: No, but to insure this doesn't happen we are moving the inlet approximately 600 ft south of the existing inlet and further away from Davey's Lake.

Question: Do the lateral channels have to have a slope of 1V to 5 H?

Answer: No, that is the proposed maximum-sized channels. The actual size of the lateral channels will be determined by adaptive management.

Question: Can you install shallow monitoring wells around some of the freshwater areas to insure that trees are not impacted by the saltwater and also as an early indicator?

Answer: Yes, shallow wells with a 1 ft screen located 5 to 6 ft below land surface can be installed anywhere we can walk. The number of this type of well will be limited by available funding for the monitoring portion of the project.

Question: Can we be added to a Pond Creek email list?

Answer: Yes, we have started a list. If you would like to be added to our emailing list please send an email to us at Mervin.e.brokke@usace.army.mil.

Question: Will you be answering the questions that were posed at the October 13, 2005 public meeting that can now be found in the public transcripts?

Answer: New questions (questions not already received in writing during the NEPA comment period) that were brought up by the public speakers will be addressed in the main body or in a separate section of the Final Environmental Assessment.

Question: What happens in the project area now? How far does the salt water intrude? What are the controls?

Answer: Approximately 60 acres of the lower marsh of Pond Creek are currently being inundated by tidal flow. Currently, there are no controls on tidal inundation into Pond Creek and there is very limited protection from Delaware Bay storms.

Question: Salt water is not good in Lower Cape May Meadows project but is good here, why?

Answer: The Lower Cape May Meadows project is surrounded by high density development which prevents the re-introduction of tidal flow to that area. Pond Creek is a much larger intact natural system that allows for the restoration of a natural tidal creek.

Question: Do the interior main channels and laterals expose the ground to more salt water intrusion?

Answer: Yes, to conditions that existed in 2000 and no to the conditions that existed in 1800.

Question: How much material will be dredged by the mosquito department? What is the process? Does it disturb the land or wildlife?

Answer: Since adaptive management will be used to determine the exact alignment and size of the interior channels, the exact amount of the material to be excavated by the mosquito department will be determined at that time. The process will be that the mosquito commission will excavate a channel and side-cast the material nearby. Yes, there will be a temporary disturbance to the land and the wildlife in the vicinity of the excavation.